



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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Barrett Continues Fight for Milwaukee Taxpayers Unfairly Overburdened by Milwaukee School Choice Program

Mayor Tom Barrett today pointed to an article in a national educational journal, "Who Gains, Who Loses?" to highlight how Milwaukee taxpayers are adversely affected by the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program while taxpayers outside Milwaukee save money.

The article's author, Dr. Robert M. Costrell from the University of Arkansas, assesses the fiscal impact of the Milwaukee Parental School Choice Program in the Winter 2009 edition of *Education Next: A Journal of Opinion and Research*, and confirms what Barrett has said along: rather than fully funding school vouchers out of the state's general fund where the savings accrue, 45% of the cost is deducted from the MPS equalization aid payment, even though MPS' aid payment has not included funds for the Choice Program since 2000.

Therefore, not only are students in the Choice program not counted when it comes to calculating state funds for MPS, but the actual costs of educating them is paid for by MPS. As the program continues to expand, its reckless financing system increases the costs for Milwaukee taxpayers.

"It infuriates me that Milwaukee taxpayers continue to lose in this equation," said Mayor Barrett. "How is it that the voucher program, intended to strengthen educational attainment for our young people, benefits taxpayers in every part of the state except Milwaukee?"

Even with the new High Poverty Aid program, which the State put in place last year to help address what Barrett has called the Choice "funding flaws," Milwaukee taxpayers are still on the hook for at least \$25 million in extras costs in 2008. This translates into \$120 extra for the average Milwaukee homeowner this year.

"Now more than ever, during these strained financial times, Milwaukee families could use \$120 to put gas in their cars and food on their tables. It is time for the State to do right by Milwaukee taxpayers and fix, once and for all, these serious funding flaws."